Amendments to the Claims

1.   (currently amended) A network termination unit, comprising:

a port operable to receive content signals;

a demodulator operable to demodulate the content signals into demodulated content signals;

a decoder operable to decode the demodulated content signals into display signals; and

a module operable to:

extract content identifying data associated with a particular content signal of the content signals from that particular content signal, ~~and to~~

detect use patterns of a user viewing display signals on a viewing device, ~~and to~~

transmit the use patterns as use pattern packets,

detect services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services at the network termination unit, and

transmit the services available information in the use pattern packets.

2.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the network termination unit further comprises a set-top box.

3.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the network termination unit further comprises a cable modem.

4.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the viewing device further comprises a television.

5.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the viewing device further comprises a computing device.

6.   (currently amended) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the use pattern packets are identified as such using a content discovery protocol that uniquely identifies use pattern packets from among other packets.

7.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the decoder is also operable to decode the demodulated content signals into command and control signals.

8.   (canceled)

9.   (previously presented) A content analyzer, comprising:

    a port operable to receive use pattern packets from a network termination unit;

    a decoder operable to decode the use pattern packets into data;

    a processor operable to:

        analyze the data to derive viewing information;

        monitor services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services at the network termination unit; and

        characterize the network termination unit by that viewing information.

10.   (original) The content analyzer of claim 9, wherein the content analyzer resides at the distribution hub.

11.   (original) The content analyzer of claim 9, wherein the content analyzer resides at the head end.

12.   (currently amended) The content analyzer of claim 9, wherein the decoder decodes the use pattern packets in accordance with a content discovery protocol that uniquely identifies use pattern packets from among other packets.

13.   (canceled)

14. (original) The content analyzer of claim 9, wherein the processor is operable to use the characterization of the network termination unit to target video content to that network termination unit.

15. (previously presented) A method of transmitting use patterns, the method comprising:

tracking use patterns of a viewing device, based upon selection of content on the viewing device;

tracking services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services for the viewing device;

formatting data representative of the use patterns or services available information into network packets as payload data;

setting a network packet header to identify the payload as use patterns, forming a use pattern packet; and

transmitting the use pattern packet.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein setting a network packet header is done in accordance with a content discovery protocol that uniquely identifies use pattern packets from among other packets.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises tracking video content delivery to the viewing device users.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the video content further comprises programs.

20. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the video content further comprises advertising.

21.   (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the use patterns or services available information of a viewing device further comprises use patterns or services available information of service extension offered on the viewing device.

22.   (currently amended) A network termination unit, comprising:

a means for receiving video content signals;

a means for demodulating the video content signals into demodulated video content signals;

a means for decoding the demodulated video content signals into display signals;

a means for displaying the display signals;

a means for extracting content identifying data associated with a particular video content signal of the video content signals from that particular video content signal, and

a means for detecting use patterns ~~or services available information~~ of a user viewing display signals on the viewing device~~;~~

a means for detecting services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services at the network termination unit; and ~~to~~

a means for transmitting the use patterns ~~or~~ and services available information as use pattern packets.

23.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 22, wherein the network termination unit further comprises a cable set-top box.

24.   (original) The network termination unit of claim 22, wherein the network termination unit further comprises a cable modem.

25.   (currently amended) The network termination unit of claim 22, wherein the means for detecting ~~use patterns or~~ services available information is operable to detect delivery of video content.

26.   (currently amended) A content analyzer, comprising:

a means for receiving use pattern packets from a network termination unit;

a means for decoding the use pattern packets into data; and

a processing means operable to:

analyze the data to derive viewing information;

monitor the data for services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services at the network termination unit; and

characterize the network termination unit by the ~~that~~ viewing information and the services available information.

27.   (original) The content analyzer of claim 26, wherein the content analyzer resides at a distribution hub.

28.   (original) The content analyzer of claim 26, wherein the content analyzer resides at a head end.

29.   (original) The content analyzer of claim 26, wherein the processor is further operable to target the network termination unit by its characterization.

30.   (previously presented) An article containing machine-readable code that, when executed, causes the machine to:

track use patterns or services available information of a viewing device, based upon selection of video content on the viewing device;

track services available information, the services available information indicating an availability of services for the viewing device;

format data representative of the use patterns or services available information into network packets as payload data;

set a network packet header to identify the payload as use patterns, forming a use pattern packet; and

transmit the use pattern packet.

31.	(original) The article of claim 30, wherein the article contains machine-readable code that, when executed, further causes the machine to monitor status of delivery of video content.

32.	(currently amended) The content analyzer of claim 9, wherein the processor is further operable to ~~monitor~~ track a quality of service of services provided to the network termination unit.

33.	(previously presented) The content analyzer of claim 32, wherein the processor is further operable to track reception of content signals by the network termination unit.

34.	(previously presented) The content analyzer of claim 32, wherein the processor is further operable to determine if data of a particular service that should have been received by the network termination unit at a point in time was received by the network termination unit.

35.	(currently amended) The content analyzer of claim 32, wherein the processor is further operable to verify a complete delivery of an advertisement to the network termination unit.

36.	(previously presented) The network termination unit of claim 1, further comprising a module operable to monitor a quality of service of the content signals.

37. (previously presented) The network termination unit of claim 36, wherein the module operable to monitor the quality of service is further operable to track reception of the content signals by the network termination unit.

38. (previously presented) The network termination unit of claim 36, wherein the module operable to monitor the quality of service is further operable to determine if data of a monitored content signal that should have been received at a point in time was received.

39. (currently amended) The network termination unit of claim 36, wherein the module operable to monitor the quality of service is further operable to verify a <u>complete</u> delivery of an advertisement.

40. (previously presented) The network termination unit of claim 1, wherein the content identifying data is a transport stream identifier.